

IMMORAL CUSTOMS



(ABRIDGED).

BY
LADY COOK.

(Née Tennessee Claflin.)

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The Deterioration of our Race.

Mankind in common with all organic beings, are afflicted with a multitude of diseases, all of them originating from a wilful or ignorant disregard of natural laws, or from inability to comply with them. It is the glory of Science to discover the causes of these evils, and the ambition of civilization to effect the means of their prevention. The utility of both depends largely upon their success in thus protecting the race, and each effort in these directions enlarges every humane influence, and tightens the bond that binds us to each other. In the attempts to mitigate the suffering of others, our own hearts are enlarged; in promoting the general happiness, our own is also increased. And, when thus exercised, science and civilization are invested with the highest attributes of genuine religion.

In this holy work no terms are to be made, and no distinctions observed between one disease and another. True beneficence is concerned only with prevention and healing. Prevention is better than cure, however, for, strictly speaking, health is holiness, while to heal is only to restore to that condition. To prevent disease is consequently to keep sound, entire, whole, or to preserve physical or moral holiness, according as it applies to body or mind. When both are perfect we have the perfect man.

We have said thus much because our subject is an unsavoury one; because the disease we desire to prevent is one hardly to be named. It contaminates the highest as well as the lowest. No rank, nor sex, nor condition of life is exempt from it. It spares neither infancy nor virtue. It fills our hospitals, decimates our armies and navies, and poisons the fountains of domestic happiness. It produces a host of other diseases, and deteriorates whomsoever it touches. We have the testimony of the most eminent philosophers, scientists, and

physicians, that it saps the vitality of every people it attacks, and that its wide dissemination in this country seriously imperils the moral and physical welfare of the nation now, and must be still more injurious in the future.

The intensity of this foul disease is proportionate to the vileness of its origin. For it is the production of the grossest immorality of past times, and has been kept alive by the same means. But where or howsoever it originated, or by whatever misconduct it is maintained, must not stand in the way of its prevention. If human foresight and provision can extirpate or subdue it, common humanity requires that they should be exercised in the most effective manner.

Unfortunately the best method is that which meets with least favour in many influential circles. We do not believe that the Contagious Diseases Act was a perfect measure, but it has been conspicuously proved that it succeeded to a large extent in suppressing the evil. Its deficiencies were, that it did not go far enough, that it was restricted to a certain number of small areas instead of applying to the country at large; that compulsory medical inspection was confined to suspected women only, whereas it should have extended to suspected men also; that no penalties were attached to wilful infection by individuals of either sex; and that the police alone were empowered to give information and to arrest offenders. A tyrannous power was thus given to the police over the class of immoral women, and not seldom over moral women also, and this power, as the selection of attack was at their discretion, and they had only to swear they had *cause* to believe, was occasionally exercised in a partial and arbitrary manner. The police are acknowledged to be a useful class, but no one accuses them of being highly intelligent. It would be unfair to expect so much from them. And the misconduct or mistake of an

inexperienced member of the force in a single instance was sufficient to set the community aflame with indignation. Great meetings were held all over the country. The forces of religious enthusiasm and popular sentiment were excited by writers and lecturers whose zeal exceeded their knowledge, until the Government, wearied by these attacks and by monster petitions, reluctantly consented to the repeal of the Act. Nevertheless, it was believed then and is known now to have been an Act in the right direction, and only required to be made more comprehensive.

As we write, a remarkable letter has just appeared in one of the chief London Dailies, written by "An Old Campaigner," which we should like to quote *in extenso*, if we could. After remarking that "It is upon the English soldier in India that our Empire there rests," he says: "When I was in India, in 1894, I learnt, with surprise, on remarking the small numbers of a certain regiment, that half its men were in hospital from causes directly due to the suspension of those sections of the Cantonment Act which affect the question. I was horrified to learn that nearly half the English soldiers in India were suffering more or less from the same cause. A week ago I received a letter from the Punjab, which corroborates the information given to the world by the *Times* India correspondent last week, namely, that 24,000 English soldiers were more or less afflicted by this terrible, nameless disease. It is time the British public should know the price they are paying for the suspension of the Act. . . . Imagine the terrible sadness and the blighted lives of those men, who leave home full of life and vigour, eager for the excitement and adventure only to be found in the East, when attacked by this fell disease, from which in that climate they rarely recover; obliged to drink to maintain their strength, they pass from hospital to hospital, until at last they

are invalided home, shattered, worthless, drunken wretches, fit for no occupation. Can anything be more terrible than this? And the pity of it, for there is, or rather was, no army on earth to compare with our English forces in India I am sure it will be useless to appeal to the sympathy or the mercy of those stern purists who agitated for the repeal in 1884, but if it is pointed out that they are being taxed to support 50,000 or 60,000 English troops in India, nearly half of whom are practically useless, and that their pockets suffer, they may answer to the call, and our young soldiers be saved from a horrible life and a premature and disgraceful death."

We have no quarrel with the well-meaning people who caused the repeal of 1884, although we have seen no sufficient reason for that repeal. Neither do we advocate legislation which would give a state license to vice. But when we contemplate the horrors of the disease in question, and the frightful misery it creates, we are convinced, apart from all sentimental, moral and religious considerations, that it is the solemn duty of the State to use every proper means in its power to provide for its extinction. We presume all agree on this point, even the "stern purists." But opinions differ as to the means. In relation to these, three important factors have to be first considered; the constancy of human nature; the antiquity and universality of prostitution, and the causes which render its suppression a moral impossibility.

No legislation can alter human nature. We have, therefore, to take men as they are and do the best we can with them. We may educate, enlighten, exhort, frighten, and substitute good habits for evil ones, but there will still remain a substratum of the brute and savage, liable to crop up at any unexpected moment. The dividing line between morality and bestiality is a very thin one. A blow on the head, a lesion of the

brain, a glass too much, or a sudden temptation, has converted many a moral man into an immoral one. Men of every race, colour, and creed, have also from time immemorial formed for themselves a social code which permits certain sexual liberties. However much they may have restricted the indulgence of the amorous passion to women, they have been very generous to themselves. They have invented a high moral standard for the former, and a low one for themselves. They have environed women more or less with lofty ideas of marriage, of virgin chastity, and wedded loyalty, but have left themselves comparatively free to violate them all and to follow their own devices. Hence, even in the purest communities, deviations from chastity are venial for men, but utterly degrade women. If the depravity of immoral men in the poorer walks of life is disgusting, that of those among the rich and the high-born is inexpressible. We have it on unimpeachable authority that young girls are inveigled into city dens under false pretences, not by procuresses alone, but frequently by men moving in good society, and their virtue is sold to jaded roués at enormous cost, the youthful victims being turned into the street when their purchasers have tired of them. The exposure which took place in New York recently is another instance of the shameless depravity which occurs among the rich, but which seldom comes to light. Whatever legislation may be brought about, we may be sure immoral men will still circumvent it to indulge their illicit appetites.

Prostitution existed as a regular calling ages anterior to the time of Moses. It was the natural sequence of the institution of marriage. Before that all the women of a tribe were held in common, and gave their embraces to whomsoever they would. When, however, some were appropriated by a rude marriage, and those unmarried had a marriage value, there were still many who kept up the old communal custom from mercenary motives. The laws of demand and supply were as

valid then as now. The priests utilized this custom to their own advantage, and religious prostitution became in many countries the occasional duty of every woman. In Babylon, young girls crowned with flowers went in public procession to the Temple of Astarte to offer their virginity to the goddess through the priests, to whom the first-fruits of all things were rendered. Thousands of years before the Christian era, the sacred Dove—a Phallic emblem—was accounted the interpreter of the Divine will, and Semiramis, or Samaramis, signified the Divine token, the type of Providence. The image of the lascivious goddess Suria was crowned with a golden dove. The Archite deity which was so universal, was also worshipped under the symbol of a dove, called Cupris, Jonah, Oinas, and Venus. The priests and soothsayers of Dodona were styled Jónah or Doves, so were the priestesses of Egypt and Chaldea, the latter of whom were accustomed to prostitute themselves in their temples as a part of their religious rites. Phallic worship and prostitution were everywhere inextricably combined, each assisting the other. The celebrated Solon carried on a profitable trade by purchasing and letting women, and this was afterwards acquired and extended by the Athenian State as a source of revenue.

The avenues of Ceramicus and the arcade of the Long Portico swarmed with the State harlots, who were lodged there. In the most virtuous days of Rome, the arches and vaults on the outskirts of the city concealed the same class of women, and thus from the Latin *fornix* an arch or vault, we derive the English verb to fornicate. As luxury spread and the demand for them increased, they were admitted to prescribed quarters of the city, were licensed and registered, and accompanied the Roman armies into every country. Eventually they were even admitted to the royal palace, and the Emperor's servants collected their fees.

The Roman Church adopted the system of the

pagan government to which it succeeded, and spread it wherever she ruled. Although the northern races of Europe alone regarded prostitution with abhorrence, their repugnance was overcome with their conversion to Christianity, and Stockholm to-day is the most vicious capital in Europe. The "stews" of Southwark, formerly adjoined the palace of the Bishop of Winchester, by whom they were licensed and regulated, and farmed to capitalists like the renowned Sir William Walworth, Lord Mayor of London. Henry VIII., to spite the clergy, abolished these, yet prostitution flourished all the same.

Whether we turn to Asia, aboriginal America, Africa, or Europe, at any period, we find this social evil abundantly existing. Notwithstanding the severity of the Mosaic laws, it abounded among the Jews. In spite of the Koran, it has always flourished in Arabia. And the purer doctrines of Christianity have not sensibly diminished it amongst those who profess them.

It is difficult to ascertain at what period the *lues venera* made its first appearance in Europe. It is said to have been introduced after the discovery of America, and brought to France on the conquest of Canada. If so, we owe it to France and the Red Indian. Since then male and female prostitutes have spread it over the whole of the known world. Many oceanic races have been swept away by it, and its malignity has been more destructive than famine and war combined. This disease, unless checked, threatens every people with national disaster. It is therefore a serious matter for the consideration of all good citizens.

More than fifty years ago the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, of Glasgow, was formally memorialized by eleven hundred citizens of all religious persuasions, including a large number of eminent divines and public men, to give a series of lectures on "Female Prostitution." This he did with a manly boldness befitting so grave

a subject, and from that time to this an immense amount of attention has been given to the suppression of the "Social Evil," and the diseases incident to it.

The necessity for this is evinced by the magnitude of both. Mr. Tait in his work on "Magdalenism," published in 1842, which was copiously quoted by the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw in his lectures, calculated the proportion of professed prostitutes to the adult male population in his time, as "about one to every eighty" in Edinburgh. "In London, there is one for every sixty; and in Paris one for every fifteen." While, of New York he affirmed, "it will scarcely be credited, that that city furnishes a prostitute for every six or seven of its male population. . . . The number of prostitutes supposed to exist in Edinburgh is 800; in London, 8,000; in Paris, 18,000, and in New York, 10,000, which gives the proportion above stated." But these quotations were believed by a large number of other respectable authorities to be very far below the reality. In Paris they were variously calculated from *four* to *sixty* thousand, and in London from eight to eighty thousand. The Rev. Dr. McDowall, writing of New York and referring to the private harlots in that city, said: "The aggregate of these is alarmingly great, perhaps little behind the proportion of the city of London, whose police reports assert, on the authority of accurate researches, that the number of private prostitutes in that city is fully equal to the number of public harlots." He added, "the Rev. Mr. Stafford, formerly employed as a Missionary among the depraved population of our city, published his conviction, after careful investigation of the subject, that there were 15,000 abandoned females in this city (New York), and our population, permanent and transient, was one-third less than it is now."

There has always been a great difficulty in forming accurate statistics on this subject, but presuming that the numbers given approximated to the truth, and that the ratio of these women to the adult male population

has remained much the same, the magnitude of the evil can scarcely be realized. Each woman is the centre of an infectious and horrible disease, which she communicates to the men who consort with her, and these again infect other women, often contaminating their wives and their unborn children. Dr. Hannay said, "not one girl in twenty continues a course of prostitution without contracting disease within the first three months." Mr. Tait found that "the great majority are affected with the disease a few months after they have forsaken a life of chastity, and very few escape it during the first year." This conclusively proves to what an alarming extent it prevails among the male prostitutes by whom these women are thus contaminated. All agree that reformation rarely occurs, and only, in any case, after a confinement "for a sufficient length of time to allow new habits to be formed, or from other accidental causes." Mr. Tait said that, "It may be stated generally, that in less than one year from the commencement of their wicked career, prostitutes bear evident marks of their approaching decay . . . not above one in eleven survives twenty-five years of age . . . perhaps not less than a fifth or a sixth of all who have embraced a life of prostitution, die annually." Captain Hiller, then Chief Constable of Glasgow, wrote: "The average age at which women become prostitutes is from fifteen to twenty:—the average duration of women continuing prostitutes is, I think, about five years; the most common termination of the career of prostitutes is by early death, and this is to be accounted for by the extremely dissolute life they lead. For the most part they live in a state of great personal filthiness; they have most wretched homes; they are scarcely ever in bed till far in the morning; they get no wholesome diet, and they are constantly drinking the worst description of spirituous liquors. In addition to these evils, they are exposed to disease in its very worst forms, and, from their dissolute

habits, when disease overtakes them, a cure is scarcely possible."

Parent Duchâtelet, in his great work, "*De la Prostitution dans la ville de Paris*," published in 1836, says:—"Of all the contagious distempers which affect mankind, and which work the largest amount of detriment to their social existence, there is not one more serious, more dangerous, more to be dreaded, than syphilis. I may affirm, without fear of contradiction, that the calamities of which it is the source, surpass the ravages of all the plagues which from time to time have spread consternation through society. . . It prevails among ourselves; it prevails amongst our neighbours; it prevails everywhere. It does not, it is true, take off its victims suddenly, but notwithstanding that, the number of these victims is immense. Its ravages are incessant. It attacks more especially that part of the population which, from its time of life, forms at once the strength and the wealth of nations. By the debility which it induces, it incapacitates for the production of a vigorous progeny, and where it does not occasion sterility, gives birth to an unfortunate and degenerate race, unfit for the due discharge of any functions, whether civil or military, and which becomes an absolute burden upon the community, and finally, in our modern society, there is no security against its assaults, even to the purest innocence. How many hired nurses, how many faithful wives, how many hapless sucklings, are from year to year the subjects of its cruel invasions? This insidious disease, when it fairly pervades the system, is absolutely ineradicable. It produces loathsome ulcerations, destroys the palate, tonsils, and eyesight, rots the flesh and exfoliates the bones, until the whole body becomes a sickening mass of corruption. Besides all these, the sufferings of its victims are much more severe than those from any other disease, and, where death does not speedily ensue, years may pass without any mitigation of their agonies."

The moral depravity associated with it is extreme. Men and women of vicious lives become at length so hardened that they have no conception of moral responsibility, and are positively eager to infect others. This may partly account for the horrible seductions of young children, boys and girls, who become thereby contaminated. During eight years, in three of the largest hospitals in London, 2,700 cases occurred of children from eleven to sixteen years of age, suffering from venereal diseases. From ten to twelve was a frequent age, and a City Missionary in London described the case of a little girl of eight, who had been outraged and infected in the house of her own mother, who was also a patient at the Lock Hospital. We dare not submit to our readers any of the worst cases which have been brought under our notice in regard to young children. The lives and the sufferings of those so outraged, whether by their own consent or the acts of others, are horrible beyond description. It is sufficient to add that numerous procuresses are always actively engaged, in various parts of the Kingdom, in seducing extreme youth and maiden innocence, and the newspapers frequently notice the mysterious disappearance of young girls. Mr. Talbot says:—"The Sabbath is a favourite day with these wretches, and they watch young children going to Sunday schools, and entice them to their haunts, nay, I believe children have been actually taken from the schools in the sight of teachers and companions, they having no idea of such a shocking system being in operation. As soon as the children are secured, they are sold, and their ruin sealed perhaps by some hoary-headed debauchee, at an enormous price."

As it is impossible to suppress immorality between the sexes, it is our duty to endeavour, by every possible means consistent with reason, to diminish its extent and to obviate its worst evils. We do not allow anyone to propagate pestilence, small-pox or any other infectious diseases with impunity, except the venereal.

Nor is there any other reason why the last should be thus favoured, except such as springs from a mistaken sentiment. We are told that "the quality of mercy is not strained," but the mercy of many of our public moralists and religionists over this subject has been strained to the breaking point. This disease is Nature's method of punishing immorality, say the former, therefore let us do nothing to ensure the safety of those who practice it. This is the due reward of sin, say the latter, therefore let us do nothing to make vice easy, lest we sin against God. Pulpit and platform resounded with arguments of the sort between 1864 and 1883 when the Contagious Diseases Act was passed and repealed. But Professor Lionel S. Beale said, as others think, that "The Contagious Diseases Acts not only facilitated and expedited cure of the sick, not only secured for the wretched patients proper care and kindly treatment during their illness, but indirectly affected much for the improvement of morals. Through their beneficent agency not a few have been snatched from degradation, ruin, and death; hope and work soon taking the place of despair and the prospect of ever intensified misery. . . . It seems to me that our action rests upon the broad principle that it is our duty to relieve, and, if we can, cure the sick as quickly as possible, irrespective of other considerations. . . . Every person suffering from syphilis should be placed under medical treatment, and should be properly branded as to the contagious nature of the disease." But, he adds, "There is evidence of the advantageous working of the Acts, not only as regards the detection and cure of the disease, but in reducing the number of brothels, and dispersing their occupants, in diminishing juvenile prostitution, as well as in curing and preventing the spread of contagious diseases. By the action of Mr. Stansfeld and those who support him, all this is changed, and prostitution is left to run its course. Terrible disease, which for some years past has been checked in the

localities where these Acts were in force, is again to be permitted to spread far and wide."

The *Lancet* bemoaned the final repeal of these Acts in 1886. "The pity of it!" it said. "After opening up a way of return and providing a place of repentance for the most pitiable lost class of our great mixed community, and extending the blessings of the healing art to those who have perhaps the very least claims on the sympathy and help of their fellows, a rampant spirit of that self-righteousness which affects to find an excuse for refusing to do good lest evil should come has succeeded in undoing all that mercy has achieved. The crazy and fatuous agitators against the Contagious Diseases Act have clamoured at the office doors of a weak Government, and profited by the impressibility of a sentimental majority in a scratch House of Commons. Henceforth, forsooth, that we may not run the risk of seeming to countenance vice by dealing kindly with the vicious disease and immorality in its most revolting forms, is to riot in the midst of our army, navy, and civil population of our garrison towns! When will the weak-minded sentimentalists of this nineteenth century cease to worry the life out of humanity with their whimperings? Is it too late to treat this subject as involving a question for serious argument? It has been conclusively demonstrated that the Contagious Diseases Acts were of marked value to the interest of health and morals. It remains only to bemoan the fatuity which has allowed them to be set aside."

Nay, something else remains, namely, the determination to re-enact those laws in a wiser and more comprehensive form; to make them apply to all who suffer from this disease, irrespective of sex, or rank, or person; to devise methods by which its sufferers shall become officially registered, isolated, and medically treated; and, generally, to do whatever may be possible to stamp it out in this country by regulations severely and impartially administered, such as being branded on some conspicuous part of the body.

The opponents and repealers of the former Acts had colourable justifications for their action. They could point to the degrading conditions which were imposed upon a special class of women and upon them alone, although they were not the only offenders. For these women had all of them been infected by men, for whom no restraints, nor compulsory examinations were provided. The objectors said: "This is class legislation of the worst type, and only partially effects the purpose for which it was designed. In addition to which it still further degrades those who require elevating, and officially brutalizes them day by day, making them the slaves of an immoral system of State vice. Appeals of this kind, if apparently substantiated, are never made in vain to a British Public. All the shrieking sisterhood joined in the cry. Pulpit and Press resounded with it, and thus the repeal was reluctantly wrung from a weak House and weaker Government.

The proposed new Act must have none of the vices of the old ones. It must attack the disease, not the fallen women. It must restrict the examination of women to medical women, and that of men to medical men. It must provide for the security of the whole community in lieu of that of a few soldiers and sailors. It must make the same rules for both sexes. It must inflict severe punishment on all who expose others to the risk of contagion. And if it could stop "street-walking," (of both sexes), and every other mode of plying the immoral trade in public, it would add much to the comforts and decencies of City Life, and materially diminish the dangers which now beset our youth, and to which they ought not under any circumstances to be exposed. But if we do none of these things, matters must go from bad to worse. Are we to wait for the further deterioration of our race before applying the remedial checks? We have spared our readers the horrible statistics which prove how common and how contagious are these loathsome diseases, and with what ease and

frequency they are spread. Their recital would serve no good end, and would be inexpressibly painful. But they may be assured that the reality is worse than any possible description. In this matter neither exaggeration nor rhetoric are needed. The pathetic facts tell their own tale.

We would therefore urge each of our readers by all the claims of humanity, of social and physical purity, of morality, and of that just benevolence which is the soul of real religion, to do whatsoever he or she may be able to bring about the necessary remedies for this wide-spread evil. In this case severity is mercy. We need the new law speedily, and such a law, that like the angel of old, it may stand between the living and the dead until the plague be stayed.

Mothers and their Duties.

The position of a mother is so onerous, and entails so many high responsibilities, that no one should undertake it without much thought and a full assurance of being worthy and capable. No other office on earth is so sacred as this, no calling involves so much. For she has not only to build up and nurture the highest organism, but she has also to mould its character. Her physique will control her child's; her emotions will be communicated to it; her mental and moral capabilities will be largely transferred; her conduct will give a perpetual bias to its life. It is impossible, therefore, to exaggerate the importance of a mother's influence.

An immense proportion of women, however, undertake the duty without the least forethought or consideration, without weighing their own fitness for

mothers, or that of their husbands for fathers. Hence arise much misery, many unhappy homes, and wrecked lives. Hence, too, a weak progeny is to be found in so many households—some physically, some mentally, and others morally deficient. Capacity for marriage is the last thing thought of in entertaining it. Good looks, an amiable or sprightly manner, a sufficient income, stand first. These are all well in their way but may be followed by the evils mentioned.

An idiot may beget a child, an imbecile may become a mother. The function of reproduction is common to all forms of life—to the lowest as to the highest. But the most perfect of each class must be the fittest for the perpetuation of their species. A well-proportioned body, free from organic and hereditary disease, a sound and well-balanced mind, a serene and generous disposition, combined with a good moral and mental training, go to make up the requisites of a good mother. Nisbet, in his work, "Marriage and Heredity," borrowing from Schopenhauer's "Daphnis and Chloe," says: "Probably the dialogue of the most romantic pair of lovers in the world, if divested of its flummery, would take the following shape :—

HE: I want to be the father of a fine boy or girl, and I think you can help me. Will you?

SHE: With all my heart.

HE: You are plump and well-proportioned.

SHE: You have fine stature and muscular force.

HE: You are healthy.

SHE: So are you.

HE: You are fair, gentle, and trusting.

SHE: You are dark, energetic, and firm.

HE: Your features show nobility and pride.

SHE: Yours courage and goodness.

HE: You have delicacy of sentiment and virtue.

SHE: You perception and honour.

HE: You are very intelligent.

SHE: You are very clever.

HE: All these qualities combined will make a very fine boy or girl, and that is why I prefer you to any other woman.

SHE: And that is precisely why I prefer you to any other man."

No mother can evade any of her responsibilities without injury to her offspring. No part of them can be advantageously delegated to another. So long as she is true to Nature, Nature is kind to her and hers. But the universal mother avenges herself on all who disregard her laws—first by pain, and afterwards by extinction.

In savage life instinct will supply almost all a mother requires, but in a high state of civilization like ours instinct must be supplemented by careful training. The earliest civilised people, the Egyptians, provided little girls with dolls, just as we do. But it is only recently they acquired that name. Not many years ago they were called babies. Every little girl, therefore, had her baby, whom she handled and dressed, fondled and provided for, and whom she still affects to regard as a living being. The instinct of maternity is thus exercised early. But when the dolls are put aside, the free conversation with her mother on marital topics which existed formerly when she was old enough, has become "indelicate" in these later and more fastidious times. The daughter of the wealthy or high-born classes had first a foster-mother whose milk nourished her. Now rich and poor alike, instead of the mother or foster-mother, resort to a combination from a cow and a pump. The child of any class sees little of its mother. The nursery or the street, the school or the workshop, keeps them apart. The daughters grow up to early womanhood with too much knowledge of sexual matters or none at all. And those who are accounted the best mothers are those who withhold from their young daughters all the invaluable stores of information which their experience has provided ready to hand, and which, if

discreetly communicated, would save thousands of girls from ruin and disgrace.

Practical philosophers have recommended that women on the way to be mothers should exercise the greatest care, not only in what they eat and drink, but also in what they feel and think; that they should give way to no excessive emotion, and should read books of history or other lofty thought; in a word, that they should try to feel, think, and do whatever is worthiest. It is well-known that children have been born idiots through the mothers having used stimulants to excess; that they have been produced deformed through these having been ordinarily frightened, and even with broken limbs from the alarm of thunder or a cannonade. A mother's emotions, therefore, are proved to effect her unborn child more than herself.

Every mother who is able should suckle her own child. The reasons for this are too many to enumerate, and should be obvious to any intelligent woman. The practice of wearing tight clothing over the bosom should never be indulged in by girls and young women, as it checks the growth of the lactiferous glands, as well as the beauty of the bust. Non-use for generations will eventually reduce them to mere embryos.

Every mother should also give her child a fair share of her companionship. What can we expect from children if they are left almost entirely to menials or mercenary nursing? The death-rate of the little ones is enormously high. May not this be largely owing to the want of a mother's loving care and watchfulness? It is only in the case of a foolishly indulgent or a wickedly severe mother that the child is better off with a sensible nurse.

The training of a child should begin with its earliest intelligence. Good horse-breakers say that, to acquire perfection in training, the colt or filly must be taken in hand from a year old. Puppies cannot be trained well after that age; six months or earlier is

usual. The more intelligent child must be soon educated. This is no work for an ignorant girl. If nurses must be had, they should be women of education, character, and experience, and at least equal to the mother in sentiment and polish.

For the foundations of the child's character are now being laid. An ill disposition may be corrected or improved, and a good one may be irretrievably spoilt at this stage. Its nascent intelligence may be directed into noble or ignoble channels, its thirst for knowledge wisely gratified or ignorantly supplied. It is here that no care can equal that of a prudent mother, and no other's influence proves so lasting. How many of our greatest men have been proud to confess that it was at the knees of their mothers that they received the guiding impulses of their lives—that it was to their wisdom that they owed their own.

In the case of girls especially it is the duty of the mother to be the guardian and instructor of their youth. She should cultivate frankness in her little daughter, and before the latter is old enough to be demoralised she should teach her all that is necessary to prevent the imprudence of ignorance. No false modesty should restrain her from explaining to her child the mystery of maternity and the duties pertaining thereto. Thus armed and equipped by the hands of love, the virtuous maiden can step into the world and encounter the foes of innocence without fear or shame, for she is protected by an invulnerable moral panoply of modesty and intelligence.

Social Injustice.

If some speculative philosopher were to place before us an Utopia of his own creation in which a large class of the community, no matter what its character and conduct, or how great its ability, were condemned to all sorts of punishments for no fault of its own, we should at once recognize the injustice of such a state of things and utterly repudiate a society so constructed. Yet, after centuries of civilization, we are in that self-same position. And no one whose soul is not corrupted by superstition, or whose judgment is not perverted by custom, can fail to see and feel how false it all is. To visit any human beings with pains and penalties, or civil disabilities, because they were not born under certain special circumstances, requires, to say the least, some sort of reasonable justification. It is not enough in such a case to tell us: "We are but following the example set in the dark ages," or "These rules were framed by others long ago," because we, as a free people, are at liberty to make any needful change, and possess the power to right social wrongs.

If natural children were congenitally more defective in body or mind than others, it would still be a great hardship to punish them for the accident of their birth. Expediency, however, might in such case suggest that their increase should be discouraged and made as difficult as possible. But a large number of our most glorious men and women were undoubtedly illegitimate. As a matter of fact, natural children so far from being inferior, are frequently if not generally superior to those born in wedlock. And there are many good reasons why this should be so. For they are usually born of parents in the flush of youth and health, whose embraces have been kindled by the ardour of love or passion, whereas the others are too often the fruits of a jaded or sated union, of an unwilling submission to the demands of married life, or of parents past their prime or worn down by ill-health and anxieties. Physiologists assure us that the vital force of a child,

with all its potential activities and powers, depends upon the state of the transmitted vitality of the parents, and especially of the father. If, however, married women had full control of their maternal functions, few cases would occur where they would have more than two or three children, with an ample duration of time between the birth of each, and thus their offspring would be as strong and healthy as those of the others, provided they were equally healthy themselves.

There is, therefore, not only a select period of life for transmitting life, but within that period there are times more suitable than others. None ask to be born, nor are in any way responsible for their being born. This event depends absolutely upon the caprice or determination of others. But every one improperly produced has a moral right to ask, why did my parents dare to give me life when they knew they were unfit for the purpose? And when the deeds of the ancestors corrupt the blood in the veins of an innocent descendant, he is apt to say, like Sir Francis Norton, of Deane Park, in Conan Doyle's story, when the doctor informed him he must not marry the beautiful girl he loved. "But where's the justice of it, doctor? If I were heir to my grandfather's sins as well as to their results I could understand it, but I am of my father's type; I love all that is gentle and beautiful, music, and poetry, and art. The coarse and animal is abhorrent to me. Ask any of my friends and they will tell you that. And now that this vile, loathsome thing—Ach, I am polluted to the marrow, soaked in abomination? And why? Haven't I a right to ask why? Did I do it? Was it my fault? Could I help being born? And look at me now, blighted and blasted just as life was at its sweetest! Talk about the sins of the father! How about the sins of the Creator!" And when the doctor endeavours to soothe him, and says, "We must take these great questions upon trust. What are we after all? Half-evolved creatures in a transition stage; nearer, perhaps, to the

Medusa on the one side than to perfected humanity on the other. With half a complete brain we can't expect to understand the whole of a complete fact, can we, now?" and so on; the agonized youth baronet cries out "Words, words, words! You can sit comfortably there in your chair and say them—and think them, too, no doubt. You've had your life; but I've never had mine. You've healthy blood in your veins. Mine is putrid. And yet I am as innocent as you. What would words do for you if you were in this chair and I in that?" It is worse than idle, however, to arraign Providence for the vices and sins of humanity, or because the guilty are always able to cause suffering to the innocent. It may be that these are the stripes with which we must be healed; that in this way, and this only, can we learn Nature's great lesson, that the power of procreation is not given to man for a pastime or for sensual indulgence; that it is not for the weak or vicious or the deformed in body or mind, but it is a glorious and godlike privilege worthy only of the completest manhood and womanhood, and to be exercised as though it were a sacramental duty. It is not the formal permit of a priest that can sanctify it, nor can the course of fashion or custom hallow it. Its justification lies deeper: in the wholesome requirements of the living and in the rights of the unborn. And unless these two synchronize, the act is accursed of God and disastrous to man.

Consequently, marriage alone—that is our conventional system of marriage—cannot justify the reproduction of human beings. For under this system the unfit increase and multiply with every sanction and encouragement that law and custom can give them, and fill the world with the weak, the vicious, and the insane. When the priest, at the publication of the Banns of a couple, invites the congregation to declare if they know of any just cause or impediment why these two persons should not be joined together in Holy Matrimony, he is thinking only of canonical

impediments: as infancy, prohibited affinity, and bigamy. Suppose any one present were to rise up and say: "The man is suffering from an incurable and transmittible disease—to put it mildly let us say a spinal complaint—or, he has lived a profligate life and is a worn-out debauchee;" or "The woman is a woman of lewd antecedents and corrupt life." The marriage would proceed just the same, and an action for slander would be the only result. Thieves, drunkards, imbeciles, and the vilest characters will have the sanction and assistance of Holy Church as readily as the best and purest. Many a clergyman who would resist re-marrying a virtuous divorcee, will cheerfully tie the connubial knot for a harlot.

Again, it has of late years become a common circumstance for married parents to see with considerable pride and satisfaction the birth of their child in the newspapers. No matter who they are or what sort of a child, they publish it to the world. But suppose an unmarried couple were to attempt to do much the same thing, how would they fare? How would this strike us in the list of births?

"On Saturday, November 21st, Alice Smith, spinster, was delivered of a fine healthy boy."

Would any advertisement manager receive it, and if not, why not? Is the birth of the weakly epileptic of my Lady Tomrioddy of more importance to the community than that of the lusty youngster of Alice Smith? Or is it that hypocrisy pervades laymen and clerics alike?

These things must be governed by morality, say some. So say we. But what sort of morality? Is it moral for us to bring into the world children like Sir Francis Norton, whose lives we may reasonably know beforehand will be a curse to themselves and others, on the plea that we are privileged to do this by marriage? It is more immoral for us, although we may not have gone through the marriage ceremony of our day, to bring children into the world whose lives, if treated as others are treated, we may reasonably expect will be those of good citizens and an honour to themselves and to the commonwealth? When a very large proportion

of married women are known to be unfit to become mothers, and yet are compelled, and an equally large proportion of unmarried women, are admirably adapted, but with no chance of marriage, is it more to be condemned if any among them do become mothers only once when the former may outrage nature by having ten or even twenty inferior children whom nobody wants? Our morality, however, is exercised in promoting the birth of the unfit and in discouraging that of the fittest, and so long as society misapprehends what true morality is, our social evils will continue to flourish. The same test, however, must be applied to marriage as to other doctrines: "By their fruits shall ye know them."

What are the fruits of the present system! Bitter shame, poverty, and degradation for the unmarried mother, too often culminating in murder or suicide. For the child, neglect, social ostracism, starvation, and an early death, or if it escape these calamities, lifelong disabilities and the scorn of the community are its portion.

Nor are these results all. Scores of thousands of women who, after the birth of one child, would have been happy mothers, and many of whom would have lived pure lives singly, or subsequently have married the fathers of their children, are by the contempt of society, annually forced into the ranks of prostitution and become thoroughly brutalized, swelling the torrent of pollution which rolls publicly and ceaselessly throughout the length and breadth of the land. Abortion is frequent. But we make bold to say, believing as we do in the good-nature and manliness of men, that nine-tenths of those who are free to do so would marry the mothers of their children before these were born, if this might be honourably done without any stigma attaching to the wife or child afterwards.

Child murder, too, so flourishing now, would comparatively cease if we had a law of legitimation through which a generous man could do justice to his innocent children and their mother in this country as in others.

And then there are the private immoralities from

which probably few homes are altogether free, the quiet seductions of which no one hears, frauds, deceits, falsehoods, and all the numerous deeds of darkness.

Thus the question is forced upon us whether a healthy girl when she becomes enceinte, perhaps more through her mother's fault than her own—from want of maternal teaching—should be driven from society and from respectability, from home and hope. Possibly, however, the maternal instinct in her is truer and greater than any conventional rule or system.

Therefore we plead that, in the instruction of our youth, Physiology should take the foremost place. A knowledge of ourselves and of the laws of our being must be of more importance than any other branch of teaching. Compared to these, Latin, Euclid, and many popular subjects of study, are of little consequence. Every public school should be compelled to give adequate teaching regarding the human body and its functions, and every private school should be deemed useless that failed to do the same. If we were habituated from our early youth to a proper study of these matters, and if girls especially were thoroughly familiarized with them, the indiscretion to which we have alluded would not so often occur. The more profound their acquaintance with the beauty of the human body, and the purpose and harmony of its organs, the greater would be their reverence for God's handiwork and the deeper their own self-respect. They should be taught not to be ashamed to think and speak of these things, and in this way true modesty would take the place of the false. Rather should they be ashamed of the sickly prurience that averts the eyes from a nude statue or picture, even when it idealizes and glorifies humanity by the finger of genius; they should be ashamed of the ignorance of the mothers who bore them and of their own unpreparedness for the maternal duties which they are all too ready to assume; they should, in fact, be ashamed not to know those things which they are now ashamed to be suspected of knowing. And the instruction we advocate would

tend to sweeten and purify those seminaries for our male youth, many of which are, at present, dens of vice. In addition to this it would soften the gross animalism which is so frequently gratified by men with recklessness and at the cost of the virtue and happiness of the women who yield to them, whether sweethearts or wives. The unequal conditions of husband and wife on this point have been eloquently described by John Stuart Mill. He says : " I am far from pretending that wives are in general no better treated than slaves ; but no slave is a slave to the same lengths, and in so full a sense of the word, as a wife is Above all, a female slave has (in Christian countries) an admitted right, and is considered under a moral obligation, to refuse to her master the least familiarity. Not so the wife : however brutal a tyrant she may unfortunately be chained to—though she may know that he hates her, though it may be his daily pleasure to torture her, and though she may feel it impossible not to loathe him—he can claim from her, and enforce the lowest degradation of a human being, that of being made the instrument of an animal function contrary to her inclinations."

The truest picture of humanity, in its most exalted form, is not that to which the millions of Christendom are accustomed to look up to—the Christ on the Cross—but is " The Happy Family." This it is which should adorn every house, from the palace to the hut, and assist to purify the hearts of its members. The happy mother gazing with pure eyes into the eyes of her innocent babe ; the father regarding both with manly satisfaction and content ; here lie the perfection of our nature and religion—of genuine religion—the ideal to which all may aspire.

He who appreciates her, will give to every other woman the respect which he demands for his own mother or sister, and will see in the child a vision of hope and happiness, which should be the birthright of every human infant. Humanity, thus idealized, becomes a natural religion : not for a sect alone, but for the whole world.

Our marriage system has not worked out so well that nothing can be said against it. After all, it is only a long-tried and faulty human experiment, to be altered or modified in any way if the happiness and welfare of mankind will be increased thereby. Who can be ignorant of the multitude of brutalities practised on woman under its authority, and for which its victims have no remedy. What can be more degrading to any human being than to be compelled to submit to sexual union against her will, or what more cruel than to be forced to bear children year by year until physical and nervous exhaustion ensue? Yet these are only a small part of its evils.

There are in England alone nearly a million paupers maintained wholly or partly out of the poor rates, at a cost of about nine millions a year. The blind and deaf-mutes in the country number over 36 thousand, and the incarcerated idiots and lunatics amount to about 90 thousand. Of these, one-fourth are officially stated to be the victims of heredity. The criminals *punished* in 1887 were over 163 thousand, and the misdemeanants nearly 530 thousand. Nearly the whole of these were the fruits of marriage, of legal marriage by Act of Parliament, which encourages their breeding to any extent, no matter how debased or criminal, destitute or unfit, the parents may be. Marriage gives them a license to deluge society in this way with every kind of human derelict. In one asylum for the blind, six of the inmates were the offspring of the same parents, and the father, a clergyman, respected for his piety and good works!

Ought not such a man to have received penal servitude? If men like these are callous to the misery they cause, how think they the mothers feel who are compelled to bring forth such children?

Only quite recently an inquest was held at Hammer-smith on the body of a mite of three months, the daughter of a wharf labourer, found dead in bed between the mother and another child. The father identified the body, but could not say the child's age. His wife would know, but he had so many children he could not remember them all.

Is marriage, then, a perfect system, when the poor man has so many children that he cannot remember them all, and the rich and noble produce the feeble progeny of unwise unions, contaminated by hereditary disease, not the least of which are epilepsy and imbecility? Are these the truly "well-born," or should the title more properly be given to the *natural* children of healthy and vigorous parents like Alice Smith? If we were as wise as we ought to be, which should we desire to extirpate, and which to preserve?

The vices that afflict the common happiness and render the homes which should be joyous, scenes of heart-rending misery, appal us and make us sometimes question whether as a nation we are not deluded even to insanity on the marriage question. How otherwise could we tolerate with general complacency the unions which are daily and duly formed: the old with the young, the sick with the healthy, the sound with the unsound, and the indigent and vicious with each other. Year by year the standard height for the army is lowered—just now it has again been lowered for the foot-guards—because the physique of our poor is constantly deteriorating through their undue multiplication with all the hardships which follow and which press so heavily on their infancy and youth. Boys and girls in their teens, stunted and under-fed, are coupled at their discretion by marriage officials. No questions are asked and no objections made. A system which encourages evils such as these must eventually impoverish the national life and prove most prejudicial to our country. A few years ago we English believed in the divine rights of kings to govern. This absurdity has been very properly abandoned, but we still believe, or affect to believe, in the Divine Right or Institution of Marriage. It is here that the initial difficulty in the way of improvement arises. A great State Church and three hundred Dissenting sects combine to propagate this sentiment. In whatever else they may differ, they agree on this point. But this superstition, like others,

will have to be removed before the spirit of social justice can operate freely. The hedge-sparrow and the hawk, no doubt, pair by the same divine right as the peasant and the peer. Marriages are *not* made in Heaven. They are of the earth earthy, and those forms are best which best effect their purpose: The happiness of the parents and the welfare of their offspring.

The fact is, we want a rational system of marriage in lieu of that made by priests and registrars. The candidates, like those for any other duties, should be suitable or efficient. Instead of drifting into it blindly or purblindly, our youth should be educated in its requirements, and none should be permitted to enter that state without a medical certificate of their fitness. We require medical certificates for almost every position or duty, but for that which is by far the most important of all, and which will deeply affect future generations, we dispense with them altogether, and accept the license of a priest or registrar instead. No sane person takes a house without first making enquiry respecting its sanitation, yet the majority enter marriage without the slightest knowledge respecting the physical, mental, and moral condition of their partners and their families. And thus every diseased or incompetent person is at full liberty to flood the world with the unfit. Why should there not be an equal amount of care exercised in selecting a partner as in taking a house? Or why should it be thought improper for two young people to discuss all matters bearing on marriage with candour and freedom, and, especially that referring to their future children? If this could be done, and provision made for their children, a physician's certificate should be a legal license for the consummation. Then, if they want the blessing of a priest it would be appropriate, and then at one stroke a thousand forms of social injustice would be swept away. We do not sufficiently recognize the responsibility of parents as to the quality of the children they bring into the world, laying too much upon the interference of Providence, and crediting it with what

does not justly belong to it. We forget that we are at liberty to do good or evil, to exercise the power of procreation wisely or unwisely, according to the measure of our enlightenment, our sense of honour, our habit of self-restraint, and our conceptions of right and wrong.

Thus children are produced from the exercise of passion rather than of reflection; from lust instead of love; from self-gratification in lieu of duty. The power to bless or curse them with a heritage of good or evil lies in our hands. Therefore, if the birth of any is to bring a stigma upon its authors, let it be branded upon those only who deserve it. Let it be given to the married or unmarried parents who bring diseased, weakly, or vicious children into the world. Let it be an indelible disgrace for a woman to produce any kind of monstrosity, or defection from the normal, and let her be honoured, be she whom she may, who mothers a sound and healthy infant.

Do our readers know what is constantly taking place to an alarming extent? The worst are permitted to be the most prolific. Only a short time ago an insane patient, the father of eight insane children, was admitted to an asylum five times, and five times discharged, and at each discharge was free to produce more insane.

Surely this is not liberty but license of the most dangerous character. And it is only one example out of thousands.

As things are it is far too easy for careless and vicious parents to rid themselves of their natural and civil obligations respecting their children. They are ready enough to produce them, but are always scheming to lay the burden of their care and maintenance on other people's shoulders. And society encourages them, rival organizations frequently struggling for the honour. What madness is this! Why should we be so eager to preserve and to perpetuate the vile, and to increase the number of the unfit? Nature has marked them out for destruction. Left to themselves they would surely become extinct in a few generations. But with pious

audacity we resist the eternal design, and drag them up to maturity, that they may contaminate the healthy and through them live on for ever.

This shifting of responsibility is a huge mistake. Parents ought to be solely accountable not only for the kind of children they produce, but also for the manner in which they bring them up. If a school child play the truant the parent is fined. But if the same child be guilty of the grossest depravity, the law punishes neither. When children, who, from their age, are irresponsible in the eye of the law, outrage nature, who should be punished, they or their parents?

The unenquiring mind can hardly imagine the abounding extent and loathsomeness of juvenile immorality which goes unchecked and unpunished. A lady guardian informed us that there were in her work-house two girls under fifteen, both of whom were about to become mothers through incestuous intercourse with their own brothers, and these are not the worst cases that occur. Can anyone doubt that if parents did their duty, such horrible depravity would be almost impossible? If the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children by the justice of an eternal decree, is it not time that we should imitate Providence and visit the sins of the children upon the fathers?

Seeing how much is becoming known respecting the influences of selection and heredity, there can be little doubt that, as mankind become generally more enlightened, intelligent methods of human propagation must supersede the ignorant, happy-go-lucky modes now in vogue. No one who breeds domestic animals would dream of doing so without careful selection in regard to pairing. Bulk, colour, shape, age, health, spirit, and pedigree are all minutely considered. And when civilized men shall be bred as carefully as cultivated plants and birds and beasts are now, we may hope to obtain a race more perfect than any of those in their kind. This great change can, however, never be effected without intermediate preparation, and nothing

could assist it more than giving every virtuous and fit woman such an education that she could be safely trusted with the privilege of selecting the father of her children. Men have had the chief power of choosing wives so long that it seems only fair that women like these should have their choice now, and it would then be seen if this would not improve social and sexual relations and mitigate or remove the stigma of illegitimacy, with the horrors which attend it, and the excess and unwilling child-bearing of married women. For few married women would desire more than two or three children if left to themselves.

This right of selection would be particularly applicable to women who earn their own living, and are financially independent, and therefore we plead that all occupations should be open to all women, and the same pay given them for the same work as for men; that they should be always encouraged to rely upon their own efforts for a livelihood, and that property should descend equally to a man's children whether boys or girls. No doubt the women would occasionally make mistakes in their selection but we believe their judgment would be sound on the whole, and they would neither abuse their privilege nor squander their property in riotous living as men often do. Will it be forgiven if we say: They would not try to debauch every man they might meet, nor be ever looking for promiscuous amours, nor support worthless men in idleness and frivolity, nor keep armies of male prostitutes in every town and squads in every village? But modestly, and even reluctantly, they would choose their husbands to the honour and welfare of both, and thus to them the marriage-feast would become as a devotional duty, to be solemnized only on serious occasion and for a special purpose, and worthy of prayer and praise. The union would thus denote an act of free grace instead of enforced submission, and would become a pledge and token to posterity of the spiritual renovation and intellectual and physical progress of mankind.

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